



**ASHESI UNIVERSITY COLLEGE**

**INVESTIGATING THE ATTITUDES OF COLLEGE  
STUDENTS TOWARDS BRAND LOGOS**

**BY**

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Thesis submitted to the Department of Business Administration, Ashesi  
University College

In partial fulfillment of Bachelor of Science degree in Business  
Administration

## **DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original work and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere

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I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by Ashesi University College.

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Date: 14<sup>th</sup> April, 2015

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

It has been a rewarding experience for me in conducting this research. All thanks to God- thank you for seeing me through everything especially in helping me choose this topic when I thought I could not find anything worthwhile. To my supervisor, Mr. Anthony Ebow Spio for nurturing me, being patient and giving me useful feedback.

I am also grateful to all the lecturers who helped us weekly with the Capstone Workshops.

I would also like to thank Theresa Dei Dzanie for her support.

Special thanks to Jason, thank you for being of support and seeing me through the last days of this paper, I will always remember.

To Phoebe as well, my amazing coordinator and friend, thank you for always being there.

**DEDICATION**

*To mummy, daddy, Richard, Eugene, Paula, Emmanuel, Chief and  
Odette*

### ABSTRACT

This research is known as '*Investigating the Attitudes of College Students Towards Brand Logos*'. Logos are visual branding elements of brands that help in identifying and differentiating one brand from others. The context of this paper is to understand consumer knowledge of brand logos and more so to reveal how salient a logo is to consumers in the areas of general attitudes, brand personality and purchase. In this research, the focus is placed on college students in the University of Ghana and Ashesi University College.

The research question and objectives include:

#### RESEARCH QUESTION

- What is the attitude of college students towards brand logos?

#### RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To investigate the attitudes of college students towards logos
- To explore the attitudes of college students towards brands through logos
- To ascertain how logos affect college student purchasing behaviour

The study is a qualitative study and data collection has been organized through in-depth interviews and focus groups. This research seeks to fill the literature gap by focusing specifically on college students. The findings have revealed that college students prefer logos that are simple, have an attractive colour, and are creative. Some of the logos within this winning category included the Vodafone logo, Apple logo and the Snapchat logo among others. In addition, students are also able to tell a brand's personality; Brand personality is the association of human personality traits with brands (Aaker, 1997) stipulated by Jennifer Aaker namely: Sincerity, Competence, Sophistication Excitement and Ruggedness through its logos. What this means in simple terms is that, if the brand were to be a human being, it would

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either exhibit any of the above characteristics. A personal favourite of students was the Apple logo, which they largely found as sophisticated with a large number of banks falling under competence. In addition, the study revealed that logos somewhat affect buying decisions of students, the look of a logo had the ability to influence purchase.

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## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 RESEARCH PURPOSE & INTRODUCTION**

Think of the forbidden fruit characterizing the Apple brand, the stool and rising sun in the Ashesi University College emblem, the yellow arching lines of McDonalds, the green font in the new Agricultural Development Bank (ADB) look, the famous Greek mythological Siren on Starbucks products and "Swoosh" for Nike. These organisations and a million others have woven what they stand for and the essence of their products and services alongside the experiences they offer into icons, symbols and texts, which are universally known as logos. In 2014, three local brands in Ghana within the banking industry changed their logos. These brands are ADB, Ghana Commercial Bank, now known as GCB and Merchant Bank currently known as Universal Merchant Bank. These firms have had their logos for several decades and have decided to change to signify a change in their internal processes either due to a rebranding strategy or an acquisition respectively. How have consumers reacted to these logo changes in Ghana? Are there ongoing conversations or thoughts and opinions about the new look of these firms? Or is there no need for a discussion about the changes.

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This research is entitled, *Investigating the Attitudes of College Students Towards Brand Logos*. A logo is an essential branding element that organizations have adopted among other elements however; a logo is a visual illustration of an organization's identity, which stands out. This research seeks to explore the attitudes of college students in Ghana towards selected brand logos. Specifically, the brands used extensively for this study consist of brands in product categories that cater for the needs of college students, brand logos that they know and can relate to in the areas of telecommunications, banking, social media and collectively, phones and laptops. These categories play diverse roles in the lives of college students from them receiving monies and using ATMs to redraw cash sent by guardians or parents from banks, and communicating by the use of social media, laptops and on the phone through the telecommunication company they subscribe to and laptops they own for school work and other purposes.

“The creation of differentiated, successful and sustainable brands has gone beyond the promotion of tangible, functional and salient benefits into the mystical realms of emotion, perception and image”(Schmitt and Simonson, 1997). Visual stimuli play a critical role in building brands by differentiating products, cutting through clutter, creating loyalty and protecting against competition (Henderson et al., 2003).

Specifically in North America, consumers continuously communicate their attitudes of delight and outrage with a company logo or a change of it thereof leading to organizations changing or maintaining their logos with notable examples such as Tropicana and Gap.

However, there is a need to understand the attitude of consumers in Ghana and how

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they react to brand logos, specifically college consumers.

Considering the lengths to which companies brand their business by combining visual communication elements to remain memorable in the market place and paying large amounts of money primarily to reach consumers attention, it is in this regard that the study wishes to explore the attitudes of college students towards brand logos.

### **1.2 RESEARCH QUESTION**

- What is the attitude of college students towards brand logos?

### **1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

- To investigate the attitudes of college students towards logos
- To explore the attitudes of college students towards brands through logos
- To ascertain how logos affect college students purchasing behaviour

### **1.4 OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS**

**College** – An educational institution or establishment, one providing higher education or specialized professional or vocational training. (Oxford Dictionaries)

**Student**- A person who is studying at a university or other place of higher education. (Oxford Dictionaries)

**Attitudes**- This is a lasting, general evaluation of people, objects, advertisements or issues. (Solomon, Bamossy, Askegaard, & Hogg, 2010)

### **1.5 RESEARCH MOTIVATION**

The motivation behind this paper is to ultimately serve as literature for firms both local and foreign in understanding how their college consumers perceive logos and how they may learn from the findings in this paper to better employ branding elements that resonate with the young adult consumer. The question stems from my intellectual curiosity and a strong interest in branding elements specifically logos. Through this, certain answers revealed will assist in better understanding the role of logos in branding and also to obtain interesting findings that may be recommended to existing and new firms concerning their choice of logos or their thought process in that aspect.

### **1.6 RESEARCH RELEVANCE**

- This project will serve as a means for organizations to have an understanding of how college students perceive brands through logos.
- It will aid organizations in designing logos that appeal to college students
- It will aid companies to make informed decisions about their logos in order to reduce the likelihood of backlashes from college consumers.
- The study will add to literature and may serve as a path for further research.

### **1.7 RESEARCH GAP**

After much research, it has proven difficult to find information about research done on logos in Africa specifically about college students though there have been a few on logos highlighted in the literature review of this paper.

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The gap this paper seeks to fill is to engage respondents from colleges as it says in its title instead of having a general response base.

In all it will aid management of companies to better target their young consumers through well- designed logos according to the preferences and viewpoints of college students.

### **CONCLUSION**

This chapter has introduced the research as well as its subsequent research questions and research objectives. It has also highlighted on its relevance and the motivation behind the study and the gap that needs to be filled in the Ghanaian context specifically with college students.

The next chapter will highlight explanations of the paper's theoretical framework, defining brands and logos as well as providing an array of different literature around the topic of logos and further expansion of the gap the paper seeks to resolve.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter covered the introduction of the research by giving insights to what a logo is as well as the research question and research objectives following a general overview of the study. In this chapter and for the purpose of contextualizing this paper, it is imperative to first understand what branding is and the role of a logo in branding by distinguishing both concepts. Furthermore, the literature will discuss different research organized around the area of logos and the relations to the study. Second, it will introduce the theoretical framework of the study that underpins the project. Third, it will also throw more light on the research question, objectives and significance of the paper.

### **1.1 A LOGO**

Based on a research done in Concordia University by Bianca Grohmann and combining various author definitions, “a logo is a sign, symbol, trademark or badge that relays the identity of a product, company, campaign or concept in as memorable a way as possible. It consists of the graphic design and typeface elements an organization uses to identify itself or its products (Bennett, 1995; Henderson & Cote, 1998). Logos appear in print and television advertising, and on point-of-purchase

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displays, packaging, business cards, letterheads, and branded apparel (Henderson & Cote, 1998).” For instance, in the case of an airline company, the logo may be printed on the exterior of the plane, it may be embroidery on a napkin or seats on board and even on uniforms of the crew flying and at check-in points.

Logos are an important element of a brand’s visual identity (Keller, 2003; Kohli, Suri, & Thakor, 2002). They serve as the face of firms, which can create competitive advantage (Balmer & Gray, 1999), and support global marketing strategy (Henderson, Cote, Leung, & Schmitt, 2003) in order to convey a memorable identity. Logos act as facilitators to speed up recognition of a company or brand (Peter, 1989). The rationale behind this is that pictures are faster than words (Edell and Staelin, 1983). This is important because many company communications are seen only briefly. With this in mind, it becomes imperative to strike a memorable chord in the minds of consumers especially in the midst of other competitors by using an iconic mark.

To buttress the point, Henderson and Cote add that proper selection is critical because logos are one of the main vehicles for communicating image, cutting through clutter to gain attention, and speeding recognition of the product or company (Henderson and Cote, 1998). Nevertheless, and despite the importance and widespread use of logos, many evoke negative evaluations, are unrecognizable and can damage the corporate image (Henderson and Cote, 1998). Studies have shown that one in 50 companies will redesign their logo in a given year (Spaeth, 2002), and at considerable expense. Given the expense involved, firms would benefit by

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knowing which customers are likely to respond more or less favorably to such changes in their logo (Walsh, Winterich, & Mittal, 2010)

### **1.2 CONSUMER ATTITUDES**

In exploring online articles, consumers particularly in North America as mentioned earlier have expressed attitudes of disgust, happiness or indifference on logos of companies. The most popular in the past years being Tropicana, Pepsi and Gap. (Male,2010). These companies rebranded their logos and the reactions from consumers showed how devoted and attached consumers are to the brands even to the surprise of the firms (Leigh Goessi, 2010). To be more specific, consumers have explicitly engaged in conversations and talks which have led companies like Tropicana and Gap changing their logos from new to old after both companies decided to rebrand through a logo change. For example, in an article written by Leigh Goessi, “Gap made a sudden move to change their decades old white lettering on navy background logo. The consumer reaction to this change was not a positive one. As soon as customers of the popular apparel company realized the familiar, and comfortable, logo that had been associated with the company for years, was no more, they immediately voiced their displeasure on various social media venues. All throughout networks such as Twitter and Facebook, a huge backlash ensued with consumers expressing their discontent and irritation with the unexpected change.

Almost immediately after the social web began a Gap logo frenzy, the company reversed their decision and instantly went back to their familiar logo. Seeing a recognizable logo is a comfort, it is familiar and way to instantly connect when a need



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arises. When consumers awoke to a sudden change, some, without a doubt, likely felt they were meeting a stranger, rather than a well-known friend.” (Leigh Goessi, 2010)

### 2.0 BRANDING AND LOGOS

Kotler and Keller acknowledge the American Marketing Association’s definition of a *brand* as a “name, term, sign, symbol, design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors”. (Kotler & Keller, 2006)

According to Van den Heever the word brand comes from the old German word “brandr”, which means to burn; to burn an identification mark or symbol unto a product, be it animal, letter or sack. (Van den Heever, 2000). Through this consumers have the opportunity to identify preferences and purchase brands they desire instead of being lost with offerings from multiple competitors. It can then be said that, the brand (mark) or packaging served as the immediate differentiating factor from rivals. This helped buyers to develop loyalties to certain merchants whose wares were seen as satisfactory quality (Lombard, 2007). With this in mind, it is interesting to note that the terms brand and logo are used interchangeably. The question then is to know the clear difference between a brand and a logo. Are they the same?

Van den Heever argues by saying a brand is not a name, logo, sign, symbol, advertisement or spokesperson. A *brand* is everything that an organization wants people, especially its target markets, to feel and believe about its product and

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services. (Van den Heever, 2000). Supporting Heever's view of a brand, a brand is a name or a combination of attributes of a product or service and its offerings in a market place that makes it differentiable from competitors considering its unique mix of characteristics and identity.

Contrary to Keller's prior definition, he counter argues that, the key to creating a brand is to be able to choose a name, logo, symbol, package design or other attributes that identify a product and distinguish it from others. (Keller, 2003). Here Keller then contradicts the American Marketing Association definition of a logo and propounds the latter which further fuels the unclear definitions of a brand and logo respectively.

Further, Nandan elaborates by saying that brands are intangible assets that can build shareholder value. (Nandan, 2004) A brand is an asset that has no physical existence and the value of which cannot be determined exactly unless it becomes the subject of a specific business transaction of sale or acquisition. (Lombard, 2007)

Duncan defines a *brand* from a marketing communications perspective as a perception resulting from experiences with the brand (Duncan, 2005). In synopsis, from the above definitions, a brand can be summarized as an experience that consumers are deliberately exposed to by organizations with the intention of fostering a specific impression in the minds of consumers.

Moreover, two perspectives of brands become evident, one perspective linking the elements in the definition of a brand with the tangibles that create the brand and the

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other linking the brand with the intangible perceptions. (Lombard, 2007)

Finally, there is consensus in the literature as captured by Adele Lombard in her research by (Kotler & Keller, 2006; Keller, 2003; Nandan, 2004; Duncan 2005; Machado 2005) that a brand can be defined as a product or service differentiated by its positioning relative to the competition. Primarily, a brand acts, as a means of identification and it is a way for the consumer to identify one product from another similar product.

Though a consensus is reached, there is an emerging definition of the role of a logo in branding from the discourse above. The logo captures the said intangible and tangible attributes of a brand into a simple identifiable mark; it serves a link between an experience and the face of a good or service. Duncan puts it spot on as *brand consists* a "mixture of tangible and intangible attributes, symbolised [captured] in a trademark (logo)..." (Duncan, 2005) A brand then acts as a message of everything a firm has promised about the brand attributes.

### **2.1 LOGOS AND CONSUMERS**

The face of the brand (logo) holds and preserves the brand identity and this facilitates the process of how consumers become attached to brands.

To support this argument, in the event of the release of the new Starbucks logo, the Senior Writer of Starbucks extensively elaborates on how their logo is an inseparable part of the brand. He describes the Siren in their logo as a storyteller carrying the lore of Starbucks ahead, a muse –always there, inspiring and pushing [the brand] forward. She's a promise that inspires wonder, urging Starbucks and all its customers

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forward to the next thing. He adds that she is the true welcoming, irresistible face of Starbucks. (Murray, 2011)

His words highlight a combination of intangible and tangible beliefs that are consistent with the brand, however extensively woven in the logo. The Siren becomes a logo and an experience at the same time; present on all of its products and other offerings.

A brand can also serve as a means of self-expression by the consumer. Since no brand is neutral, its purchase says something about the purchaser's vision of himself or herself (Lombard, 2007). An example of this is people who are perceived as being trendy, stylish yet casual when wearing Gap. It then comes, as no surprise if consumers are unhappy about a logo change because, they feel as though a part of them has been altered carelessly or the brand they know is no longer a reflection of them, the brand cannot be trusted. Consumers grow comfortable with familiarity and a sudden change may be detrimental.

### **2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

It then becomes imperative to understand the attitude of consumers in the market place. According to Michael Solomon et.al, attitude refers to a lasting, general evaluation of people, objects, advertisements or issues. Moreover, anything towards which one has an attitude is called an attitude object. (Solomon, Bamossy, Askegaard, & Hogg, 2010). In this project, the attitude object becomes the logo.

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He further argues out an ABC model of attitudes and hierarchies. Affect refers to the way a consumer feels about an attitude object. From the Marketing Association of Australia and New Zealand, attitudes are usually viewed as a long term or enduring disposition to consistently respond in a given manner to various aspects of the world (within a similar situation or context) including persons, events, and objects. There are three components of attitude:

- Affective Component: Reflects an individual's general feelings towards an object.
- Cognitive Component: Represents one's awareness of and knowledge about an object.
- Behavioural Component: Reflects buying intentions and behavioural expectations.

(Monger, 2013)

The three components above will be used to answer the three questions of the study respectively.

In relation to the study at hand, investigating the attitude of college students deals with exploring how students feel about brand logos, and the beliefs they hold towards a particular brand. It is also interesting to realize that there are levels of commitment when having an attitude towards an attitude object, discussed below.

1. Compliance: An attitude formed because it helped in gaining rewards or avoiding punishments from others. This attitude is very superficial and is likely to change when others no longer monitor a person.
2. Identification: This is when an attitude is formed in order for the consumer to

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be similar to another person or group. Advertising that depicts the social consequences of choosing some products over others is relying on the tendency of consumers to imitate the behavior of desirable models.

3. Internalization: At a high level of involvement, deep-seated attitudes that are internalized and become part of a person's value system. These attitudes are difficult to change because they are so important to the individual. For example, many customers had strong attitudes towards Coca-Cola and reacted very negatively when the company attempted to switch to the New Coke formula. This allegiance to Coke was obviously more than a minor preference for these people.

The brand had become intertwined with their social identities, taking on patriotic and nostalgic properties. (Solomon, Bamossy, Askegaard, & Hogg, 2010). According to the Harvard Business Review, in 2009, PepsiCo, owner of Tropicana, announced that it was responding to a massive public outcry against the new look by scrapping it and returning to their iconic orange. The company replaced its iconic straw through the orange fruit with a generic glass of orange juice logo, which consumers admitted to be not reflective of the brand. (Tropicana's Marketing Folly , 2009) loyal consumers had been introduced to the product from young ages, all of a sudden; they did not trust the new logo. Consequentially, revenue streams from the Tropicana Pure Premium line plummeted 20% between Jan. 1 and Feb. 22, costing the brand tens of millions of dollars. "Now that the numbers are out, it's clear why PepsiCo's Tropicana moved

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as fast as it did. According to Information Resources Inc., unit sales dropped 20%, while dollar sales decreased 19%, or roughly \$33 million, to \$137 million between Jan. 1 and Feb. 22. Moreover, several of Tropicana's competitors appear to have benefited from the misstep, notably Minute Maid, Florida's Natural and Tree Ripe. Varieties within each of those brands posted double-digit unit sales increases during the period. Private-label products also saw an increase during the period, in keeping with broader trends in the food and beverage space." (Kiley, 2009).

The internalization of the attitude towards brands leads consumers to be passionate about brand logos and the representation these logos possess in their minds.

Gregory Ciotti in his article known as *The Psychology of Colour in Marketing and Branding* he explores the various attempts to classify consumer responses of various brand logos on the basis of colour. (See appendix for Colour Guide) Moreover, he talks on the importance of colour in branding and how a perfect fit of the logo colour needs to be established and be in coherence with the offerings of the brand, specifically what is being sold. He also adds that 90% snap judgments on brands are based on colour alone. (Ciotti,2013).

Cees B.M. van Riel and Anouschka van den Ban in their research, *The Added Value of Corporate Logos* note that, in contrast with theoretical assumptions and anecdotal evidence from practice, data showing empirical evidence of the added value of logos are limited (Green and Loveluck, 1994). In the study data gathered elaborates on the knowledge about the effectiveness of logos. Their study went on to describe the perceptions of external stakeholders when confronted with a new logo, both prior to

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its launch and several months after the launch.

The research does a before and after analysis on consumer reactions towards logos to determine its effectiveness. However, this paper seeks to explore the attitudes of consumers towards existing logos and in the long run, deriving the value it has. It emphasizes on what they feel about a logo and how it reflects a brand they use or have seen, the level of attachment they have towards a logo and how it may influence their purchasing behaviour. It does not place emphasis on comparing the attitudes of consumers before and after a logo launch.

In their research, Cees B.M. van Riel and Anouschka van den Ban and, Henderson and Cote (1998) observed that logos could only have added value if two preconditions are fulfilled. First, stakeholders must remember seeing the logo (correct recognition). Second, logos must remind stakeholders of the brand or company name (recall). Ultimately, companies want their name recalled, so the logo serves as shorthand for the company (Riel & Ban, 2001).

Familiar-looking stimuli tend to be perceived and processed faster, which is particularly important for logos (Jacoby and Dallas, 1981). This could result from a logo evoking a familiar meaning or from the design being similar to well-known logos (Zajonc, 1968). A familiar meaning can be maximized (without reducing distinctiveness) by selecting a unique, but easily interpreted, design of a familiar object (Henderson and Cote, 1998).



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Furthermore, in a research titled *Do logo redesigns hurt or help your brand* by Michael F. Walsh et. al, cite that, firms such as Perception Research Services reported conducting hundreds of design and aesthetics studies every year for various clients including Kraft, Nestle, Wrigley, Target, and General Mills (Mininni, 2005). Interestingly, among the various brand elements examined, brand logo (apart from product and package design) is the most salient visual brand element for customers (Mininni, 2005) (Walsh, Winteric, & Mittal, 2010).

Their research focused on the role of brand commitment and how it affected the attitudes of consumers depending on the level of commitment they had towards a particular brand. Their findings showed that, consumers who are strongly committed to a brand evaluate logo shape redesign more negatively and have a lower brand attitude, where brand attitude was measured using a four-item, semantic differential scale developed by Ahluwalia et al. (2000) (Walsh, Winteric, & Mittal, 2010). The items were good/bad, beneficial/harmful, desirable/undesirable, and nice/awful. Strongly committed consumers have significantly lower brand attitude meaning they assigned low scores to the attributes of brand attitudes.

As similarity between the Walsh's research and this paper is that, the study employed 632 undergraduate students from an undisclosed US university in the paper. The incentive for these students was extra credits. This becomes similar to the population of this study however, their paper does not explicitly state the intention of analyzing the attitudes of college students. Also, the sample size is much smaller than that employed in their study. In this proposed study however, the intent is to focus

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intentionally on college students specifically in Ghana and their views on logos, how they view brands through logos and how logos affect their purchasing behaviour. Findings from this paper showed that consumers who are strongly committed to a brand reacted negatively to logo redesigns whereas those who were less committed or were new to the use of a brand showed more positive reactions to a logo redesign.

Another study by Bianca Grohmann explores, *The Effect Of Logo Design On Brand Personality Perceptions*. Interesting enough, her study serves as an answer to a sub objective of this study, which seeks to find out the attitudes of consumers towards brands through logos. Though this answers the second research question, this study will still focus on answering it because the method of data collection and analyzing will be vastly different; Grohmann's work was done quantitatively whereas this study is a qualitative study. Its purpose was to examine the impact of logo graphic design on consumers' brand personality perceptions, this research draws on the logo design characteristics identified by Henderson and Cote (1998). The first research question addressed was whether logo design characteristics influence consumers' brand personality perceptions at all, as suggested by Batra et al. (1993). The second research question concerns the direction and magnitude of the impact of individual graphic design characteristics on specific dimensions of brand personality (Grohamm, 2008). The logo were measured by Jennifer Aaker's five dimensions of brand personality, a psychologist and Stanford professor namely. Sincerity, Competence, Excitement, Sophistication and Ruggedness. This technique will be used to measure the attitudes that college students have towards brands through logos. The study was conducted online to 1376 English –speaking adult consumers.

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(Grohamm, 2008). Her findings conducted revealed that logo graphic design strongly affects consumers' brand personality perceptions. This means that, consumers are able to tell if a brand is sincere, competent, sophisticated, exciting or rugged. Again she adds that the important features of logos are the typeface and colour of the logo. A limit to the reporting of findings in this study was that, there were no examples of the categories, industries or types of logos used for the study. Ideally, it would have been suitable to measure the findings of this study against this literature in terms of the various categories within which the logos fall under.

### **2.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY**

The research question of this study is to understand the attitudes that college students have towards logos. The study plans on making available insights that students have towards a specific set of categorized logos, which will also shed light on the brand perceptions they hold on certain brands. Again, it will help branding or rebranding teams in organizations to see whether logos play a significant role in the purchase of goods and services, which is ultimately an objective of businesses- to make sales.

Considering the objectives stated, not only will attitudes towards logos be ascertained, it gives a further pathway into learning what a logo says about a brand. This will be an exciting viewpoint that will help firms to better fit their brand identities in line with their brand image. Brand identity is the way in which the brand presents itself to the consumer and brand image is how consumers perceive a brands identity (Copley, 2004). In addition, another important factor will be the investigation of how

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logos may or may not cause consumers to patronize a certain good or not through actively purchasing a good or service. To back this, an article published on Emerald Insight titled '*Branding not just a matter of luck*' discussed how when passengers on board Brussels Airlines planes are faced with an attractive stylized "b" on the tail, made up of 14 large dots as a logo. It has not always been 14. Back in 2007 the original design had 13 but the company was forced to amend it because of complaints from superstitious passengers, mainly from the USA and Italy as 13 being an unlucky number hence somewhat affecting their decision to fly with the airline (Emerald Insight, 2010). It would be compelling to understand what happens in Ghana pertaining to all the objectives mentioned..

### **2.5 GAPS IN LITERATURE**

- Lack of in-depth interviews in the methodology of authors used in similar studies mentioned above. The studies mentioned earlier used quantitative methods to construct their study with almost little qualitative methods employed. This is because their research objectives and research design are different from that of this study. This research will solely cover the qualitative data collection techniques such as a focus group and in-depth interview.
- Quantitative methods tend to be highly prevalent in studies of this nature. The limitation there of is that an in-depth analysis of understanding the motivation behind consumer actions is not captured. Examples include Bianca Grohmann's study, Michael F Walsh et al and Cees B.M. van Riel. In that

## **Investigating The Attitudes of College Students Towards Brand Logos**

regard, my paper will shed more light into some of the other studies that have been conducted in a qualitative format.

- **This research will narrow in on bridging the first gap of giving a qualitative approach to investigating the attitudes that college students have towards brand logos.**

## **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, this chapter has covered literature concerning areas of branding specifically the visual identity of a brand, which is the logo. It explained the clear difference between both concepts and also compared and contrasted different works of literature in relation to the study of logos and consumer behavior. It also touched on the role of logos and the value it adds to corporations. More so, it expanded on the various research objectives and questions while pointing out the relevance of the study. The gap is to first, provide a more qualitative approach to investigating these attitudes and second concentrating on a population of college students as respondents. The next chapter will cover the research methodology, the research purpose as well as data sources and populations in use.

## CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

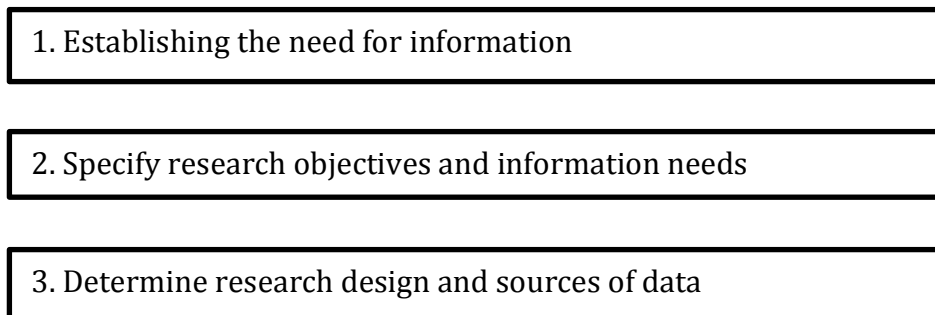
### INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter focused on literature written around the research topic as well as

highlighting results, similarities and differences between literatures. This chapter will cover the research design and purpose of this study as well as various justifications for the methods employed in the project with respect to data collection. It will also contain a set of operational definitions for the study as well data sources and sampling strategies.

A nine-step research process by Kinnear and Taylor (1997) below will serve as the reporting framework for this study.

**Figure 1: Steps in the research process**



4. Develop the data collection procedure

5. Design the sample

6. Collect the data

7. Process the data

8. Analyze the data

9. Present research results

The need for information as the first step has already been discussed in chapters one and two of this study. The purpose of this paper is to investigate the attitudes of college students towards brand logos. The literature review has shown the various gaps that this paper aims to tackle as shown in Chapter two such as collecting qualitative data and focusing on college students, accompanied with the research question and objectives.

### 3.1 SPECIFY RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND INFORMATION NEEDS

#### RESEARCH QUESTION

- What is the attitude of college students towards brand logos?

#### RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To ascertain the attitudes of college students towards logos
- To explore the perceptions of college students towards brands through logos

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- To ascertain how logos affect college student purchasing behavior.

The logos used for this study consist of logos of brands that students patronize more frequently and have regular access to. They include logos of banks, telecommunication networks in Ghana, social media logos and those of phones and laptops.

### **3.2 DETERMINE RESEARCH DESIGN AND SOURCES OF DATA**

From this premise, the type of research used in this paper is an exploratory research that seeks to understand and explore these attitudes. In Dawn Iancobucci and Gilbert Churchill's book, *Marketing Research: Methodological Foundations*, they describe exploratory research as a general picture research. It is very useful for becoming familiar with a phenomenon, for clarifying concepts... and for establishing priorities for further research." (Iancobucci & Churchill, 2009). In the study objectives, you will notice the use of language such as explore and investigate which emphasise the probing and investigative nature of the research.

Considering the exploratory nature of the study, the research design will take a qualitative approach. As defined by Catherine Hakim, qualitative research provides the "individuals' own accounts of their attitudes, motivations, behaviour, perceptions, beliefs, views and feelings, the meanings and interpretations given to events and things; displays how these are put together, more or less coherently and consciously, into frameworks which make sense of their experiences; and illuminates the motivations." (Hakim, 2000)



### **3.5 DEVELOP THE DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE**

#### **FOCUS GROUP**

A focus group was used in Ashesi University. Focus groups continue to be one of the most common data collection tool in exploratory research, providing researchers with a great foundation on where people stand on an issue. The open and natural discussion format of a focus groups allows for a wider variety of perspectives in a shorter period of time. (Penwarden, 2014)

In employing a focus group, interactions between students revealed their thought process about the questions asked and the collaborative approach they exhibited in teams assisted in receiving the general attitudes and differences they held.

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More specific, students for a focus group were easily recruited in Ashesi. This is because, there was a better understanding of student schedules in Ashesi University to organize the meeting with little or no inconvenience to the respondents at a designated time.

For the purpose of this study, two sets of focus groups were conducted to cover a larger student base.

Also in Ashesi, there was a higher chance of obtaining respondents from the current three majors in the school (Business Administration, Management Information Systems and Computer Science) using a sample size of 8-12 students per focus group. Students were recruited by being approached to be apart of the study. The only criteria for choosing students were to have a fair representation of students from majors and year groups. One focus group was made up of two representatives from

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every year group. Students were given ice-cream from their convenience store as an incentive for partaking in the study. This was only communicated to them after their participation.

An assistant moderator helped facilitate by recording the proceedings and assisting with organizing logistics for the focus group. A tape recorder was used with the prior permission of respondents to record proceedings. In addition, the class projector on campus facilitated the viewing of logos for discussion among respondents.

### **IN- DEPTH INTERVIEWS**

Malhotra (1994) defines in-depth interviews as “an unstructured, direct personal interview in which a single respondent is probed by a highly skilled interviewer to uncover underlying motivations, beliefs, attitudes and feelings on a topic.” This particular method helps in providing insight into phenomena and problems where respondents will be able to provide detailed information without inhibition. This approach was useful in the study in order to uncover the meaning and relevance of logos to college students through continuous probing.

### **University of Ghana**

A non-probability sampling technique of convenience sampling was used in obtaining respondents. This was done by reaching out to contacts in the university, who then informed interested respondents about participating in the research. The details of the research were not disclosed to them before the research. The sample size for this was 10 students spending 20- 45 minutes with each respondent.

### **3.6 DESIGN THE SAMPLE**

To conduct this research, students in Ashesi University College and University of Ghana were selected as participants for the study.

Ashesi University College is a private liberal arts institution in Ghana that situated in Berekuso, Eastern Region offering majors in Business Administration, Computer Science and Management Information Systems.

The University of Ghana is the first public university in the country with close to 40 000 students in enrollment. It is situated in the capital of Ghana, Accra. It comprises several departments and faculties ranging from its Business School, a Faculty of Arts ,Social Science ,and Law to a Faculty of Engineering Sciences.

These institutions were selected because Ashesi University College and University of Ghana are situated 23km apart, which is convenient and does not cause an enormous constraint on resources such as money and time.

The study makes use of qualitative methods in order to explore attitudes and answer the said research question by analyzing and organizing unstructured data received from respondents. This included focus groups and in-depth interview questions as discussed above.

### **3.7 ANALYZE & PROCESS THE DATA**

#### **Qualitative Data Analysis**

#### **EXCEL ANALYSIS**

Through the use of Excel worksheets, all data recorded was stored on the worksheet clearly labeling the several objectives and the questions asked under each. The

## **Investigating The Attitudes of College Students Towards Brand Logos**

various outcomes were analyzed by grouping responses, running frequencies and averages to better report the findings.

### **CONTENT ANALYSIS**

A major form of analysis in any social research is content analysis, which can be used to analyse any form of spoken or written words; projected images, such as those of film or television; or any symbolic forms such as signs, logos or cartoons. Content analysis is the systematic analysis of text or pictographic material. It can be used on both original data collected by you as a researcher, or on any range of secondary documentary sources, as discussed above. (Smith, D., & Hope, J. 1992)

## **INTERVIEW GUIDE AND GENERAL PROCEDURE FOR FOCUS GROUP AND IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW**

### **CATEGORIES OF LOGOS USED FOR THE STUDY**

| Banks<br>(In Ghana)   | Telecommunications<br>(In Ghana)         | Laptop  | Phones                    | Apps   |
|---|--|---|---------------------------|--|
| ADB<br>GCB<br>UMB<br>Ecobank<br>GT Bank<br>Fidelity Bank<br>UT Bank<br>Access Bank<br>Zenith<br>Barclays<br>Standard<br>Chartered | Glo<br>Vodafone<br>MTN<br>Tigo<br>Airtel | Lenovo<br>HP<br>Apple<br>Toshiba<br>Dell<br>Microsoft<br>VAIO | Samsung<br>Apple<br>Nokia | Snapchat<br>Whatsapp<br>Facebook<br>Twitter<br>Viber |

For the purpose of the study, five main categories of logos were chosen after interacting with college students to measure goods and services industries that most

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satisfy their needs as students. In addition, the choice of grouping logos into categories will further aid in collecting and analyzing data in a more specific and informed manner.

### **QUESTIONS UNDER EACH OBJECTIVE**

- **To investigate the attitudes of college students towards logos**

Affective component: reflects individuals' general feelings towards an object.

This component of measuring attitudes explores general and high level sentiments towards the attitude object, which is the logo.

Questions centered on asking students the importance of logos to them in their own words as well as having them rate their importance on a likert scale. This is because "Likert scaling is a list (or series) of attitude statements about the object under study is compiled and the respondent indicates his or her degree of agreement or disagreement with each of these statements used in qualitative research that is related to the object in question on a five-point scale as shown above." (Monger, 2013)

- **To explore the attitudes of college students towards brands through logos**

Cognitive component: represents one's awareness of and knowledge about an object.

It is from the broader knowledge of knowing the brands in use that respondents will be able to give more information on the respective logos beyond their aesthetics

The respondents ranked the grouped logos under:

### **CHARACTERISTICS**

## **Investigating The Attitudes of College Students Towards Brand Logos**

Sincerity

Competence

Excitement

Sophistication

Ruggedness

Bianca Grohmann titled *The Effect Of Logo Design On Brand Personality Perceptions* using the five dimensions of brand personality by Jennifer Aaker selected the characteristics above from a similar thesis in the literature review. In this study, this was done by students grouping logos as a particular brand personality as far as possible from the listed logos.

Students were also asked opinions on how a logo change would affect their attitudes towards a brand.

- **To ascertain how logos affect college student purchasing behavior**

The behavioral component of an attitude involves the behavioral expectation of an individual toward an attitude object.

The wording of statements used in these cases often includes phrases such as "I would buy," to indicate action tendencies. Students were asked about factors that influence their purchasing decisions and the relevance of logos at the point of purchase. Category scales to measure the behavioral component of an attitude ask a respondent's "likelihood" of purchase or intention to perform some future action. (See Appendix 2 for questions)

## **CONCLUSION**

This chapter has summarized the methodology to be used for this study by following a report gathering process by Kinnear and Taylor. It also clearly states the research question and objective as well as justifying the research type and design. The next chapter covers findings derived from a thorough and rigorous analysis of data presented. These findings will also be evaluated in light of the original research question and research objectives and also it will discuss discrepancies around the validity of the findings.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter focused on the desired methodological approach for the study. This chapter has the main intention of explaining how the first three chapters; the introduction, literature review and methodology have been used as guiding pillars in gathering data through the proposed theoretical framework and analyzing as well as interpreting the findings gathered.

### **4.1 OVERVIEW AND PROCESSING OF DATA**

The study consisted respondents from Ashesi University and the University of Ghana. This overview will discuss changes and alterations that were applicable on the ground versus desired intents made from the previous chapter. The total number of respondents was 26 students instead of a maximum of 22 students. Specifically, 16 students from Ashesi University, 8 students in each focus group and 10 students from the University of Ghana. As a matter of fact, students showed eagerness in being a part of the research, which led to an increase in responses. The respondents in Ashesi University were obtained through a convenience sampling method. The focus group made use of audio recorders, and the school projector for showing images to be discussed. The students were allocated discussion times on particular logos projected under the broad headers of telecommunications, banks, phones, laptops and social media logos. Each category was awarded five minutes for discussion. The discussion entailed students choosing three desired characteristics of logos they found essential for each category. A brief background of the study was



## **Investigating The Attitudes of College Students Towards Brand Logos**

also made available to all respondents. Two focus groups were conducted with 8 students in each group. The data collection technique in the University of Ghana was the same. The in-depth interviews included the use of an interview guide and a laptop for viewing the logos with 10 students.

### **4.2 ANALYZING THE DATA: ANALYTICAL APPROACH**

The study seeks to answer three main objectives:

- To investigate the attitudes of college students towards logos
- To explore the attitudes of college students towards brands through logos
- To ascertain how logos affect college student purchasing behavior

As such findings for each objective will be discussed in a sequential manner as shown above based on the theoretical framework employed. The rest of the chapter will focus on the individual objectives of this research.

### **4.3 INVESTIGATING THE ATTITUDES OF COLLEGE STUDENTS TOWARDS LOGOS**

This is one objective of the research, which seeks to measure the general sentiments that students have about logos from a primarily aesthetical viewpoint. This means that the objective will understand the preferences that students have in terms of the design of a logo and the importance of logos. This was attainable by categorizing logos into five main industries that serve their needs, they served as a guide where students chose three desired characteristics they feel were important attributes for logos within the sector or category. This gave a deep insight into the criteria that the students desired for logos in the various categories. After this step, the students

## Investigating The Attitudes of College Students Towards Brand Logos

named any three logos (displayed on the projector/ laptop) that exhibited these top characteristics.(See Appendix 3)

In total, the students successfully came up with 17 unique characteristics for all the broad categories though some characteristics were recurring across industries. Unlike the studies constituting the literature review specifically by Adele Lombard; *The Impact Of Brand Identity Strategy Of A Consumer Product On Consumer Perceptions*, Bianca Grohmann; *The Effect Of Logo Design On Brand Personality Perceptions* and Michael F Walsh et al; *Do logo redesigns help or hurt your brand?*, logos were prescribed throughout the paper to respondents. On the other hand, in this study students were at liberty to freely describe the attributes they found important to them allowing for a more representative insight to their attitudes buttressing the qualitative nature of the study.

### COMBINING FOCUS GROUPS AND INTERVIEW RESULTS

#### LIST OF PREFERRED LOGO CHARACTERISTICS FOR THE CATEGORISED INDUSTRIES

| CATEGORY           | DESIRED LOGO CHARACTERISTICS   |
|--------------------|--|
| TELECOMMUNICATIONS | Simplicity, Colour, Creativity, Character, Design<br>Uniqueness                |
| BANKING            | Creativity, Simplicity, Sophistication, and Class,<br>Trust, Vibrancy, Clarity |
| SOCIAL MEDIA       | Fun, Creativity, Colour, Character, Recognition                                |
| PHONES AND LAPTOPS | Human Touch, Subtlety, Speaks for itself,                                      |

## Investigating The Attitudes of College Students Towards Brand Logos

|  |
|--|
| Uniqueness, Beauty and Class, Simplicity, Complexity |
|--|

The table above shows that students on their own prefer certain combinations of logo attributes unique to particular categories or industries and some attributes which generally cut across all the categories. Some logos corresponding with their choices included the following; the students also gave reasons for their choices.

| ASHESI UNIVERSITY FOCUS GROUP |   |                        |   |           |
|-------------------------------|---|------------------------|---|-----------|
| A                             | OBJECTIVE 1 ATTITUDES OF COLLEGE STUDENTS TOWARDS LOGOS |                        |   |           |
|                               | Desired characteristics of Logos by Group A             | CHOICES                | Desired characteristics of Logos by Group B | CHOICES   |
| TELCOS                        | Simplicity  | GLO                    | Character                                   | TIGO      |
|                               | Color   | VODAFONE               | Design                                      | VODAFONE  |
|                               | Creativity  | TIGO                   | Uniqueness                                  | AIRTEL    |
| BANK                          | Creativity  | ADB                    | Trust                                       | STANCHART |
|                               | Simplicity  | ACCESS AND UT          | Vibrance                                    | ECOBANK   |
|                               | Sphistication and class                                 | STANCHART AND BARCLAYS | Clarity                                     | ADB       |
| SOC MEDIA                     | Fun   | SKYPE                  | Character                                   | TWITTER   |
|                               | Creativity  | TWITTER                | Communication                               | FACEBOOK  |
|                               | Color   | SNAPCHAT               | Boldness/Recognition                        | SKYPE     |
| PHONES/LAPT OPS               | Simplicity  | LENOVO DELL BLACKBERRY | Human touch                                 | NOKIA     |
|                               | Beauty and class  | APPLE                  | Subtle                                      | VAIO      |
|                               | Uniqueness  | ANDROID VAIO           | Speaks for itself                           | ANDROID   |

This table shows the desired characteristics with the logos they picked to support each choice.

Class as a logo choice was prominent among banks and laptops. For the banks, some students revealed that, the banking profession in itself is an esteemed corporate profession that distinguishes the industry from other financial services providers even from the way the employees dress and the type of customer services they receive from hospitable banks in the country. In effect, they assigned the thoughts of their banking experiences into their logo preference.

Another important discovery was that the Apple logo signifies the glimpse of an

## **Investigating The Attitudes of College Students Towards Brand Logos**

experience to the students and not a machine or hardware product. The logo is seen as unconventional in the laptop and phones industry whereas the brand also evokes prestige and class.

### **TELECOMMUNICATIONS**

***“[Brand] Character—The logo must have a character that is appealing.”***

***Logo Choice--- Tigo***

***Reason—Tigo’s logo has life and characterizes a smiling person.”***

***(Respondent from Ashesi University College)***

For telecommunication logos, a number of students believe that it is important to have a brand character that can be related to in an emotional way and this helps in forming a sentimental attachment to the logo. In the table above, this was also evident for social media logos as well. (See Appendix 3 for logos)

In analyzing the similarities between these choices by asking for reasons from students, a number of respondents showed that both industries were in the business of communicating and linking people together either family, friends or businesses and this is a good thing. Hence the introduction of a brand character to depict the sense of general warmth and connection.

***“Design—The design assists me in being attracted to the logo. If the colour is not catchy either subtle or loud, and if the font in the logo is not legible, then I wouldn’t be attracted.”***

***(Respondent from Ashesi University College)***

***Logo Choice—Vodafone***

***“Reason—The red in Vodafone is very attractive with a simple neat font that appeals to me”***

***(Respondent from Ashesi University College)***

A very interesting discovery made was that more than half of the respondents from the University of Ghana when asked about the telecommunications category constantly chose Vodafone for one or more characteristic. They talked about it with sincere interest and passion which was not as evident in Ashesi University. After a probing further about this, it was realized that Vodafone was responsible for sponsoring several events and activities on their campus.

A challenge to this is that, the student's choices may have been influenced by the heavy presence of Vodafone in their school. This gives room to a potential study to understanding if the heavy presence of brands in an area can affect the logo preference. Again, this implies that the Vodafone brand is being well managed especially in the university. Further probing revealed that students in the school from a branding and events company known as ECHO contracted by Vodafone acted were in charge of organizing such events by Vodafone and other major brands on campus.

**BANKING**

***“Clarity—Understanding of what the logo stands for should not be left.”***

***Logo Choice--- ADB***

***“Reason— ADB's logo is clear and understandable as well as humanistic.”***

***(Respondent from Ashesi University College)***

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Again students demonstrated the importance of logo having relatable human features. ADB is the Agricultural Development Bank situated in Ghana which deals with promoting agriculture in the country by lending to farmers nationwide. The company rebranded its logo in 2014. The logo moved from a circular logo filled with the brand name written in caps with a fork and axe in the center to a clean worded logo written in green small letters with a leaf above the 'a' in ADB. This new logo makes it easier for people to identify it.

***“Trust—The logo must build trust.”***

***Logo Choice--- Standard Chartered***

***Reason—The design and wording of the logo is intelligent, serious and warming.”***

***(Respondent from Ashesi University College)***

During the various recorded discussions across the two universities, students were interested in bank logos that could communicate assurance and dependability. In discussing further, it was realized that the colours and shapes used in some logos highlighted the assurance they felt.

For example, the blue eagle like-shield in the Barclays logo (see appendix) evoked a sense of confidence and trust which communicated the bank as a reliable and assuring organisation for his or her financial needs. Again the three orange arrows in the Access Bank logo created a sense of the bank as a forward-moving and

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progressive firm as commented by two respondents.

More important, a challenge with this objective was the attempt to draw a distinction where students had to solely comment on the logo in itself as a visual figure of a brand rather than inferring what the brand is through the logo.

### **SOCIAL MEDIA**

***“Fun—The logo must give an impression that it would be fun to use.”***

***Logo Choice--- Snapchat***

***Reason—“The colour is vibrant and the character in the logo adds to the fun that the logo shows.”***

***(Respondent from Ashesi University College)***

Students also disclosed that, importance of social media networks to them

### **PHONES /LAPTOPS**

***“Human Touch- Should connect with consumers”***

***Logo Choice---Nokia***

***Reason—“Fosters connection and has a human touch.”***

***(Respondent from Ashesi University College)***

The Nokia logo displayed was one which the hands of two people depicting its slogan, “Connecting People”. A number of students found it imperative for these electronic devices to have a human feel about them.

## **Investigating The Attitudes of College Students Towards Brand Logos**

From running a frequency of all the characteristics mentioned by students, the top three most mentioned were:

**Simplicity**

**Creativity**

**Colour**

From analyzing the content given, it is evident that college students have a general appreciation for logos that stand out with simplicity and less complexity. Logos that stand out by being creative from others in the same industry and are also simple in design with a suitable colour and preferably a brand character dependent on the industry. Furthermore, simplicity, creativity and colour were popular combinations as compared to character and any others. The need for having a character was not a constant priority for many of the students.

A respondent had this to say:

**“The Apple logo is one of the most iconic logos I know, very simple but no other tech company in the world has a logo as peculiar as that. Its an Apple; simply off mark and has nothing to do with tech but that’s where the creativity lies.” (Respondent from the University of Ghana).**

An observation from interviewing students was that, majority of the students were genuinely interested in discussing the Apple logo and how it stands out among other competitors. Some respondents extensively explored how the logo was ‘mind blowing’ (in their own words) to them and the sight of induced exclusivity as a logo. The logo was a personal favourite of many respondents and the attitude they expressed towards the logo was second to none.



## **Investigating The Attitudes of College Students Towards Brand Logos**

Relating this to literature, in measuring the levels of commitment, most students were at the internalization stage where they exhibited a deep-seated attitude that will be difficult to change or alter. (Solomon, Bamossy, Askegaard, & Hogg, 2010).

It is part of their value system. This means the sense of prestige, innovation and exclusivity that Apple has placed in their minds cannot be replicated or changed no matter the case, they have reached a point of absolute conviction in seeing the brand as exceptional. There were two interesting discoveries made, a word that run through the reasons for being interested in the logo was 'like'. Students simply liked the Apple logo. This discovery falls in line with Keller's criterion, *likability*. The students found the logo aesthetically pleasing and well differentiated from other logos in the industry. This helps brand management in promoting brand awareness, which means that consumers are able to recall and recognize the brand. The second discovery which ties into the first is that, since college students like the logo and considering the distinct features and visual imagery of the logo that appeals to them. It leaves a lasting impression on their memories tying in with another criterion from Keller known as memorability since it is easily recalled and recognized.

**“Colour is absolutely everything, I am not talking of how bright or dull it looks but I am talking of how suitable it fits to a brand and how it adds to the general aesthetic appeal of a logo.” (Respondent from the University of Ghana)**

In literature by Gregory Ciotti in his article on *The Psychology of Color in Marketing and Branding* he reveals that, “nearly every academic study on colors and branding will tell you that it's far more important for your brand's colors to support the *personality* you want to portray instead of trying to align with stereotypical color

## **Investigating The Attitudes of College Students Towards Brand Logos**

associations. In other words, does the color "fit" what is being sold."(Ciotti, 2013)

To further gauge students' attitudes towards logos, they were asked to individually rate the importance of logos on a scale of 1 to 5 as a measure of their attitudes. **1** being of lowest importance and **5** of highest importance. After finding an average of all the scores they presented. The average grade was **4.63** from all 26 respondents. What this means is that, logos are widely very important to college students. This means they are critical of the kinds of logos companies and organizations come up with to a large extent.

Some responses to support this finding include the following comments:

Logos are important because:

**"It gives me a feel of what the brand is like and what to expect if I decide to use it."**

**"I hate to be a brand snob but it is an extension of who you are. It says a lot about a brand." (Respondent from Ashesi University College)**

**"Through logos, the brand establishes a relationship with the customer on a basis intuitive level. It is the first thing they see. They attach great emotion to it and becomes an ambassador of the product."**

**(Respondent from Ashesi University College)**

Students shared their opinions about what logos mean to them as a representation of

## Investigating The Attitudes of College Students Towards Brand Logos

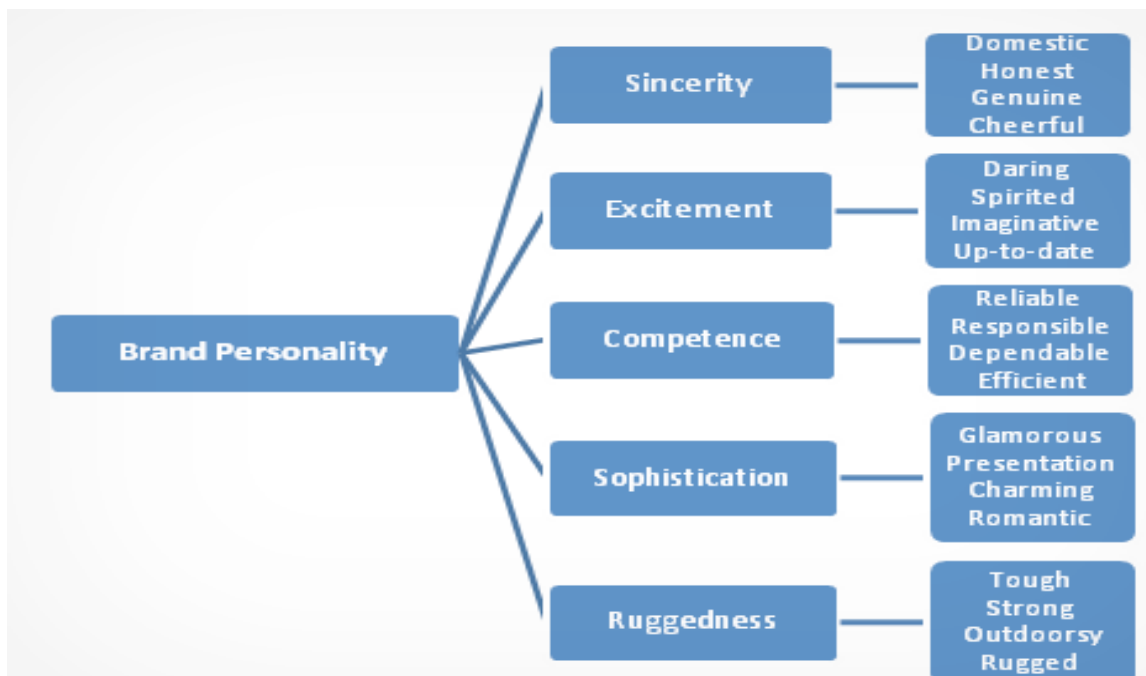
a brand. This then introduces the next objective which emphasizes mainly on how students view brands through logos.

### 4.4 TO EXPLORE THE ATTITUDES OF COLLEGE STUDENTS TOWARDS BRANDS THROUGH LOGOS

The aim of this objective is to measure if students are able to tell how they feel about brands through the logos of these brands. In the literature review, a study by Bianca Grohmann on *The Effect Of Logo Design On Brand Personality Perceptions* is a similar question to be answered in this objective. How does a logo serve as a window to see what makes up a brand. By employing the cognitive component of attitude measurement that represents broader knowledge of knowing the brands in use, that respondents will be able to give more information on the respective logos beyond their aesthetics and into what they signify as elements of a brand.

Findings for this study included listing out brand characteristics such as **Sincerity, Competence, Excitement, Sophistication and Ruggedness** as stipulated by Jennifer Aaker. Her research on Dimensions of Brand Personalities revealed that there are five core dimensions to a brand.

## Investigating The Attitudes of College Students Towards Brand Logos



(Ciotti, 2013)

Students grouped the categorized logos into one or more of the stated characteristics and this helped in understanding how they felt about various brands just by viewing the logos and more importantly having a general understanding of each brand represented in their mind.

The students grouped the logos under the five main dimensions listed above. Pertaining to the various brand personality perceptions they had about the listed brands, they grouped the logos under the five dimensions. Overall, the chart below shows the most frequent logos under the dimensions.

| Sincerity   | Excitement                 | Competence                          | Sophistication                        | Ruggedness     |
|-------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------|
| UT,<br>ADB, | Tigo, Snapchat,<br>Twitter | Barclays,<br>Standard<br>Chartered, | VAIO, Apple,<br>Barclays,<br>Standard | Toshiba, Nokia |

Access Bank, Chartered

Vodafone

In analyzing, the logos under Sincerity consist banks and a telecommunication network. Considering the constituents of this category to be honest, domestic, cheerful and genuine. Unique Trust (UT) as a brand is a financial service provider has the colours black and gold in its logos with the letter UT written in caps evoking genuineness as a brand to deliver financial services. (See appendix). ADB also recently rebranded its organization. This resulted in a logo change to one that is seen as modern, fresh, domestic representation of the bank. Tigo also appeals to a younger having a smile in its logo that corresponds to its tagline that says, "Smile you've got Tigo."

Excitement was fully dominated by the social media category mainly because of the colours used in the logos, which made the brand feel fun and exciting.

Banks and Vodafone dominated competence as a dimension. After carrying out further questions, students showed that banks provided financial services and more consumers are attracted to banks that do a good job at providing financial needs which include loans, overdraft, savings and other investing money that were complex transactions however a bank that can do this with ease is reliable and highly official.

Nokia and Toshiba were chosen for their ruggedness, strength and toughness. Banks also dominated the grouping for sophistication with Apple and VAIO.

Nokia phones generally known as rugged and durable products that withstand a

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harsh conditions and falls according to various review forums like Windows Forum.

Toshiba laptops also have been specifically designed to be durable. For example, Tecra® Z50 Series model from Toshiba “offers increased protection with a premium magnesium alloy Tough Body™ chassis, shock-absorbing design and a unique honeycomb reinforcement structure for increased rigidity and durability.” (Toshiba, 2015)

Furthermore, to answer this objective students were allowed to name any three of their favorite and share what the logos communicated about the brands. Some responses below give an idea of how the question was answered”

**“Rolex exudes class and status. Hugo Boss solidifies masculinity. Victoria’s Secret adds a lot of sex appeal to a persona and also exudes confidence.”**

***(Respondent from Ashesi University College)***

The respondent strongly agreed that the logos of the brands mentioned were consistent with the brands. The Rolex logo comprises a golden crown, which signifies a sense of status and high class, the Hugo Boss logo is made of bold black font with the words Hugo Boss written in caps giving emphasizing on the masculine nature of the brand. The Victoria’s Secret logo consists of an intertwined V and S, which exhibit a feminine aura about the logo. (See Appendix for logos)

***“The Mercedes Benz logo is pure sophistication.”***

***(Respondent from Ashesi University College)***

***“The Google logo is fun and that’s what Googlers are about.” “The swoosh in Nike is simple but honest and genuine and acts as a guarantee for delivering quality products.”***

***(Respondent from Ashesi University College)***

***“The Twitter logo is very exciting and consistent with the brand because the bird used in the logo ‘tweets’ or ‘chirps’ whenever a message is tweeted. The entire framework of twitter is based on passing information from one place to another which is synonymous to birds chirping among themselves.”***

***(Respondent from the University of Ghana)***

In analyzing these logos and their corresponding brands, it is evident that there are acute similarities between the logos mentioned and their brands personalities according to students. To make this clearer, Mercedes Benz is a luxury car brand with a circular logo made of three lines meeting in the centre of the circle that are placed on top of the grill of their sophisticated state of the art cars. The simplicity and silver lines in their logo according students who chose this brand as their favourite serves as a strong representation of the prestigious car company. Google offices worldwide are known to be colourful (as well as its logo), fun and inspiring with office foosball tables, slides, scooters and giant sleeping incubators. Their unique and vibrant office spaces are a reflection of their culture according to research. This is also evident in their logo design. Another insight revealed was that a large number of students strongly agreed that their selected logos were consistent to with the brands

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they chose. The final process used to obtain results for this objective was to determine if a change in any of the logos selected by students would affect the current brand image they held about the brand. In measuring their responses, they were asked to agree or disagree along a spectrum as depicted in the previous chapter. The findings retrieved showed that 17 out of 26 students strongly agreed that a change in the logo would affect the brand image they hold.

***“Changing the logo means change in the brand hence this can make one easily lose trust. An example is Airtel, which kept changing its logo and name. It lost so many customers in Kenya as opposed to Safaricom which has maintained its logo over the years.”***

***(Respondent from Ashesi University College)***

In addition 15% neither disagreed nor agreed and 12% strongly disagreed that a change in logo can affect a brand.

***“The change might affect my relationship with the brand. However sometimes not all change is bad.”***

***(Respondent from Ashesi University College)***

***“ I believe that these brands have become popular that a minor change might not do too much harm, but a drastic change could cause revolt.”***

***(Respondent from Ashesi University College)***

On the whole, students held varying and opposing view points that they justified considering the various experiences they have had with one brand on the other.



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Another insight realized was that, certain logos did not have meaningful designs or obvious icons that could help in understanding what the firm seeks to offer. For example, the Whatsapp logo has a phone in a speech bubble to symbolize communication, majority of the bank logos had the word 'bank' in them. However logos chosen as favourites by some students such as XBOX, Motorola, TopShop and Chanel among others did not give a direct representation of what the various brands offered. One who does not have any form of knowledge about these brands will have no clue as to what they mean. According to Keller, brands must be able to transfer meaningfulness in their brands in order to give general information about the brands and also to give some specific information about the brand where possible.

### **4.4 TO ASCERTAIN HOW LOGOS AFFECT COLLEGE STUDENT PURCHASING BEHAVIOR**

From the theoretical framework of this study the behavioral component describes the behavioral expectation of an individual toward an attitude object which is the logo. Moreover, the question seeks to ask how logos may play a role in the purchasing behavior of students.

Students answered this question by first listing out the various factors they consider when buying a product or service. In addition, they were asked if a logo would play a significant role in the purchasing of a product.

To begin with, some of the factors they listed out included:

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|                     |                     |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| Price               | Associated Services |
| Quality             | Logo                |
| Reputation/Goodwill | Customer Services   |
| Benefits            | Brand name          |
| Brand reviews       | Packaging           |

The most recurring factors were price, quality, brand name and logos. On probing further, students focused more on brands and the popularity of these brands, how many of their colleagues used them and how the product or service would satisfy a need. More so, brand names play a substantial role in determining the perceived quality of the brand. Another significant discussion was in the area of affordability. If the product is conveniently priced they would consider buying if not they may not be able to buy. Only 38% of the students found logos to be an important factor in buying decisions. To further clarify their stance using the pictorial YES and NO scale, in asking if they would purchase a good because of its logo, 46% of the students selected a weak 'yes.'

***“The logo of a brand does not affect the functionality and direct performance of a product but anyway, a good looking logo is definitely a plus but that will not substantially sway my decision of buying a product.”***

**(Respondent from the University of Ghana)**

A large majority of students hinted that there were many other significant reasons to buy a product or service and considering only the logo is not what they would do.

***“When I see a logo, it’s like judging a book by its cover even though we are***

***told not to do so but in the case where you haven't savoured the content of what you are buying that is the only option you have and brands have to get us to judge them by their cover and the cover is the logo. ” (Respondent from the University of Ghana)***

On another end a collective 42% voted a 'strong' and 'very strong yes' saying that they would buy a product because of its logo as a salient reason. To them, logos are almost as important as the product.

***“If I am going to purchase a laptop, anyone I can afford, I would go for an Apple MacBook. The logo alone on the laptop is a great sense of prestige for me. It will make me feel good plus it is a good machine.”***

**(Respondent from the University of Ghana)**

The prestige, popularity and awareness of certain brands through their logos act as a form of confidence and a sleek lifestyle trait to various college students. Having well known products like Nike sneakers, Ralph Lauren clothes and many others adds a 'cool tag' to the status of these students.

***“The Ralph Lauren logo is a classy symbol of good taste and quality. I prefer the smaller logos on the polo t-shirts to the 'oversized' ones that seem a bit too upfront. Logos are a big part of my buying decisions because if the horse in the logo is rather sitting on the man who is supposed to be riding it as seen in numerous fake versions of the brand, there is no way I am getting it!”***

**(Respondent from the University of Ghana)**

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Logos are used as symbols of identification for various brands. It helps consumers save time from sieving through clutter. In the same vein, the fear of purchasing an obviously fake product added to the reasons why students consider logos as important in their purchasing behavior. In analyzing various comments like the one above if the logo seems unusual in any way for example, inverted, irregular size and most popular wrongly spelt brand names, college students are more unlikely to purchase such products. In striking an average of the importance of logos in the purchasing decisions of students from all respondents, on a scale of 1 to 5, the result is **3.5**. This means that in general, logos are 70% important in the buying decisions of students. Further analyzing the comment above, an insight is revealed in line with a criterion by Keller for choosing branding elements known as protectability. A logo must be able to be legally protected in the international and local markets in order to safe guard from counterfeiting. This however is a problem for many brands today where counterfeited goods are sold in abundance affecting original brands.

## **CONCLUSION**

This chapter has captured the findings from collecting data in Ashesi University and the University of Ghana by students. It draws similarities and differences from some studies conducted in the literature review and extensively expands on findings from the three objectives that constitute this research. The next chapter will include interpretations of the findings in this chapter as well as general conclusions on the study.

## **CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Here, a general overview of the findings will be explained. Limitations faced in conducting the study will be mentioned and also recommendations that will be beneficial to companies that target a youthful audience.

### **5.1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

In standing out among competitors, firms need to make sure that they can be easily distinguishable from the clutter. An immediate way these can be outstanding is through a well-designed logo that is appealing to a selected target audience. An example of insight in this study is that, college students share strong opinions about what a logo should and should not look like.

The general attitude that students have towards logos is a conscious and unconscious one. In conducting the study, most students held the assumption that they hardly paid much notice to how logos looked but after interactions between and students through focus groups and individually speaking to some other students, they held strong views about what a logo should evoke to them.

After speaking to students, they were able to come up with their own set of criteria for logos in the telecommunications industry, banking industry, social media as well as the gadget industry (phones and laptops).

More interesting, though there were obviously peculiar traits for each industry, three top characteristics run through the study. The characteristics are: simplicity, creativity and colour. Class was important in the phone and banking industries and a brand

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character being essential particularly to telecommunications.

A simple logo appealed more to students instead of complicated graphic design techniques employed in other. The ability to easily tell what the image in the logo stood for with simple details is a plus awarded by students.

Creativity of logos stemmed from logos that were easily distinguishable and had striking features among other logos. In addition a simple and easy to understand logo was also appealing to college students. Crafting a logo in such a way that is easily recognizable and differentiated in a clever manner attracts students to a logo.

Third, the colour of a logo is a crucial attribute to standing out among competitors. For social media and telecommunications logos, students were more attracted to bright colours like red, green and yellow; it served as a sign of excitement, youthfulness and growth and for banks, they were are attracted to cooler and darker colours like black and blue which depicted seriousness and competence.

The average importance of logos to the respondents recruited reached a large 4.63 out of a scale of 5.

In finding the attitudes towards brands through logos, students were able to map logos to brand under Aaker five dimensions (Aaker,1997) with banks largely viewed as Competent, social media networks under the Excitement and Ruggedness for Nokia Toshiba. This also goes to support Bianca Grohmann's study as discussed in previous chapters. It has supported this study by highlighting the importance of brand personality and how logos can reflect this. To a broad extent, the findings in this paper were in line with her results where students were able to tell group logos under the five dimensions. A collective 54% of the respondents strongly agreed and

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somewhat agreed that a change in a logo would affect the image they hold of the brand. 35% however disagreed because, they were of the mindset that once a brand is of good quality, well known and recognized, a logo change will not significantly affect their view of the brand because the brand goes beyond the logo.

In conclusion, logos are somewhat essential to the purchasing decisions of students scoring 3.5 out of a scale of 5.

The general characteristics of logos that appeal to students include colour, creativity and simplicity. Students are also able to perceive a relationship between a brand logo and the brand's identity where largely possible. Logos also moderately affect the purchasing behavior of students.

### **5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Companies who have a large student base or are focused on students need to consider the design of the logos along the three top characteristics selected by students which are Colour, Simplicity and Creativity. This will increase their chances on reaching students their consumer base as a brand and also considerably at the point of purchase. This means that, if a student enters a store to purchase a good, the colour, simplicity and creativity of the logo will have a high effect on him or her either purchasing the product over others. More so, considering that students may make decisions based on logos alone in certain cases it is highly imperative for companies to have a logo that is a direct or close representation of their offerings or value.

To go a step further, in designing or re-designing a logo, it would be of great

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assistance to run market research to receive the opinions from their consumers.

In addition when creating branding elements in this instance a logo, it is imperative for a firm to use Keller's criteria for choosing branding elements such as memorability, meaningfulness, adaptability, transferability and protectability. More important, firms must rigorously defend their logos and trademarks in order to provide quality for their consumers so that consumers do not consider fake goods or services as original offerings from a firm.

Again firms should focus on fostering memorability and likability in their logos to appeal to college consumers in a unique way as findings show.



## APPENDIX 1



*Source: The Logo Company*

## APPENDIX 2

### QUESTIONS FOR FOCUS GROUPS AND INTERVIEWS

- **To investigate the attitudes of college students towards logos**

Affective component: reflects individuals' general feelings towards an object.

This component of measuring attitudes explores general and high level sentiments towards the attitude object, which is the logo.

1.What does a brand logo mean to you?

## **Investigating The Attitudes of College Students Towards Brand Logos**

2. On a scale of 1-5, do you consider brand logos as important?
3. Are there any logos you find attractive?
4. If so, mention any three
5. Would a change in any of the logos mentioned bother you? Why?

- **To explore the attitudes of college students towards brands through logos**

Cognitive component: represents one's awareness of and knowledge about an object.

It is from the broader knowledge of knowing the brands in use that respondents will be able to give more information on the respective logos beyond their aesthetics

The respondents will rank the grouped logos under:

### **CHARACTERISTICS**

Sincerity

Competence

Excitement

Sophistication

Ruggedness

The characteristics above were selected from a similar thesis in the literature review by Bianca Grohmann titled *The Effect Of Logo Design On Brand Personality Perceptions* using the five dimensions of brand personality by Jennifer Aaker.

1. Do you use products/services with any of the logos?

## **Investigating The Attitudes of College Students Towards Brand Logos**

YES            NONE            SOME

2. In your opinion, would a change in (name of logo here) logos mentioned change how you feel about the brand's identity?

- 1. Strongly agree**
- 2. Somewhat agree**
- 3. neither agrees nor disagrees;**
- 4. somewhat disagree**
- 5. Strongly disagree**

3. Do you find it consistent with the brand?

- 1. Strongly agree**
- 2. Somewhat agree**
- 3. neither agrees nor disagrees;**
- 4. somewhat disagree**
- 5. strongly disagree.**

Likert scaling• A list (or series) of attitude statements about the object under study is compiled and the respondent indicates his or her degree of agreement or disagreement with each of these statements used in qualitative research

that is related to the object in question on a five-point scale as shown above.

(Monger, 2013)

- **To ascertain how logos affect college student purchasing behavior**

## Investigating The Attitudes of College Students Towards Brand Logos

The behavioral component of an attitude involves the behavioral expectation of an individual toward an attitude object.

The wording of statements used in these cases often includes phrases such as "I would buy," to indicate action tendencies.

1. I would definitely buy this product/service because of its logo as a brand element

|                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| YES                      | YES                      | YES                      | NO                       | NO                       | NO                       |

Source: MAANZ

Category scales to measure the behavioral component of an attitude ask a respondent's "likelihood" of purchase or intention to perform some future action.

2. 1.What influences your buying decisions?

---

3. On a scale of 1-5, do you consider brand logos as important in your purchasing decisions?

|   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|

APPENDIX 3

**lenovo**

**TOSHIBA**  
Leading Innovation >>>

VAIO



**SAMSUNG**



**NOKIA**  
Connecting People



**htc**

**BlackBerry**



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Mercedes-Benz



ROLEX

Google

HUGO BOSS

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